

Episode #: 1AGE06  
Story #:

# *Firefly*

“Jaynestown”

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FIREFLY

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"Jaynestown"

TEASER

1 INT. SERENITY - COMMON AREA

1

Kaylee and Simon enter from the passenger corridor, walking slowly as they talk. Kaylee is a-glow with warm flirtation.

KAYLEE

Come on, it's true. Admit it.

SIMON

No, I won't, because it's not. I use swear-words, like anybody else.

KAYLEE

Oh really? Never heard you. When is it you do all your cussin'? After I go to bed?

SIMON

I swear. When it's appropriate.

KAYLEE

(laughs)

Simon! Whole point of swearin' is that it ain't appropriate.

Inara walks toward them, heading for the stairs up to the shuttle catwalk. She's dressed with stunning elegance.

KAYLEE (cont'd)

Hey there, 'Nara. Heading off for some glamorous romance?

Simon turns, momentarily stunned by her elegance.

INARA

(a little laugh)

Let's hope so.

SIMON

You look... very.. very...

INARA

(smiles, then heads upstairs)

That's my job, Doctor. See you two tomorrow.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1

CONTINUED:

1

INARA (cont'd)

Don't let Mal get you into too  
much trouble while I'm gone.

KAYLEE

Bye now! Have good sex!

Simon turns to her, abashed. Kaylee is innocent sincerity:

KAYLEE (cont'd)

What?

Then Simon catches sight of something through the infirmary window, shouts, and makes his way around to the door.

SIMON

AAAA!

Kaylee follows. Simon stands in shock. The infirmary has been ransacked. The contents of the cabinets cover every surface. Jayne sits on the examination table, quietly taping a SMALL HANDGUN to his bare mid-section with medical tape.

KAYLEE

Now see, this'd be the perfect  
time for a swear-word.

2

INT. SERENITY - INFIRMARY

2

Simon enters, shrill with agitation. Jayne doesn't look up.

SIMON

What happened in here?!

JAYNE

Needed to find some tape.

SIMON

So you had to tear my infirmary  
apart?!

JAYNE

(looks up at mess)  
'parently.

Simon starts putting it all away, fuming. Kaylee helps him.

SIMON

My God, you're like a trained ape!  
Without the training. No, apes are  
noble creatures, you're some sort  
of man-ape-thing that went  
horribly wrong.

(CONTINUED)

JAYNE  
(nonchalant)  
Keep that tongue waggin', little  
man, might just have to rip it out  
an' flush it down the freshener.

Jayne pulls a length of tape with a loud rip, biting it off with his teeth. MAL appears at the door, looking at the gun taped to Jayne's middle.

MAL  
Jayne, I told you, we're puttin'  
down at the Canton factory  
settlement on Higgins' Moon.

JAYNE  
Yep. That you did.

MAL  
Canton don't let you bring guns  
into their town.

JAYNE  
Yessir. That's why I ain't  
strappin' one to my hip.

MAL  
No, that's why you ain't strappin'  
one anywhere.

JAYNE  
Listen, Mal, I was in Canton a few  
years back, and I might have made  
me a couple enemies thereabouts.

SIMON  
(sarcasm)  
Enemies? You? No! How can it be?

JAYNE  
(ignores Simon)  
I just don't like the idea of  
goin' in empty-handed is all--

MAL  
Why're you still arguing what's  
been decided?

MAL stares at him, and leaves as Jayne glumly pulls the tape off, wincing.

3

EXT. SERENITY - NEARING HIGGINS' MOON

3

Higgins' Moon below: small, muddy brown, no place to raise a kid. Serenity rakes back, her belly glowing red as she hits re-entry. She makes a controlled tumble into the atmosphere.

4

INT. SERENITY - BRIDGE - DAY

4

Wash pilots, hits switches in preparation for landing, then hits the ship's comm.

WASH  
OK Inara, we're atmospheric.  
You're good to go--

5

INT. INARA'S SHUTTLE - DAY

5

Inara works her controls, heating up the shuttle's engine, disengaging from Serenity.

INARA  
Thanks, Wash. Shuttle disengaging  
in three, two, one...

We hear LOUD METAL CA-THUNKS as Serenity's locks on the shuttle are released.

6

EXT. SERENITY - HIGGINS' MOON ATMOSPHERE - DAY

6

Inara's shuttle disengages, peeling away.

7

EXT. CANTON - ESTABLISHING - DAY

7

ANGLE OVER MUD-BOG - which bubbles and farts in the FG. Beyond it, Serenity comes to rest on a landing field at the edge of a peninsula that stretches out into the bog. Factory structures stand on the peninsula's far side.

8

EXT. SERENITY - CARGO RAMP - LANDING AREA - DAY

8

Mal walks down the ramp. Wash, Zoe, stand at the bottom. Kaylee and Simon stand with Book and River at the top of the ramp, looking around.

SIMON  
Well. Canton really--  
(breathes in)  
--really stinks.

(CONTINUED)

MAL

That's what makes it a great drop point. No one comes here that doesn't have to.

WASH

I vote we do this job really really fast.

MAL

Kessler's our man, he's holding the goods we're to deliver. We go in, we make contact. Easy peasy.

(turns to Zoe)

Zoe, you're holding down the fort. Call ahead to Bernoulli, tell him we'll have his merchandise there end of the week.

WASH

Don't I usually stay with the ship?

ZOE

I outrank you. Have fun.

(kisses him)

Zoe goes up the ramp.

SIMON

So, this is a place where they... they make mud?

KAYLEE

Yep. Clay, really. Be surprised how many things it ends up in.

(pats the ship)

Serenity's got more than a few ceramic parts in her.

SIMON

Really. Huh.

(looks out)

A mud-based economy. That's almost interesting.

KAYLEE

Cap'n...? Don't you think Simon should come with us?

SIMON

What? Kaylee, I don't think that's such a good--

(CONTINUED)

KAYLEE

You said yourself this was an easy one. And he's got to get a little outlaw field experience sometime, if he's gonna be of any use 'cept doctorin -

JAYNE

(snorts)

Fat chance of that-

Jayne stomps down the ramp, joining them. He's tying the flaps of his 'thrilling heroics' hat under his chin. He pulls his goggles over his eyes. Wash sees his new look and raises his eyebrows. Book turns to Simon.

BOOK

You go on, boy. See the sights. I can watch over your sister. I believe we've been developing a rapport.

SIMON

I don't know. River can be--

BOOK

Go on. I'm a Shepherd after all. Should be able to keep my eye on a flock of one.

Book turns to River, who smiles at him sweetly, nodding.

MAL

We're not going far, doctor. And you might maybe make yourself useful.

JAYNE

Come again?

Mal turns to Jayne, sees his hat/goggles, squints at him for a beat, then continues.

MAL

The management here don't take so kind to sightseein'. Which is why we'll be posing as buyers. And there isn't a one of us looks more the part than the good Doctor.

(looks Simon over)

The pretty fits, the soft hands, definitely a moneyed individual rich and lily-white and pasty all over--

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

All right. Fine. I'll go. Just,  
stop describing me.

Mal smiles and guides Simon into the lead of their party.

MAL

You're the boss, boss.

JAYNE

He's the boss now?  
(growls to himself)  
Day keeps gettin' better and  
better.

Oh, it's muddy all right. Mud encrusts everything; the WORKERS, the pipelines that feed out of the mud-bog, the crappy structures, and THE FOREMAN who oversees it all. He wears hip-high rubberized boots, a MACHETE strapped in its sheath to one leg. Our crew passes through a chain-link fence which surrounds the area.

The foreman sees them and turns. At his throat is a thin METAL COLLAR with two flat black discs, mounted over his larynx. He touches it, and his voice projects as if from a BULLHORN, gruff and confrontative.

FOREMAN

Area's employee-only! You best be  
headin' back to the Landing, 'less  
you got business here!

SIMON

(too loudly)

YES!

(Foreman puzzled)

We're, uh--I-- Yes. I'm looking to  
buy some mud.

Mal trades a look with Wash over Simon's awkwardness. But the foreman shuts off his bullhorn collar and steps forward, all salesman smiles now.

FOREMAN

Well, then. 'Came to the right  
place.

He claps Simon on the back, his glove leaving a dusty handprint of dried mud on Simon's jacket.

10

EXT. CANTON MUDWORKS - FURTHER IN - DAY

10

The foreman leads Simon on a tour of the plant. The others follow a distance behind, and by their looks this has been going on a bit long. MUD WORKERS shamble by, bent under heavy loads of mud-bricks; clearly back-breaking work.

FOREMAN

...and a' course we can handle any volume here, got over two-thousand workers, mostly indentured, pay 'em next to nothin', so's we can pass them savings directly on to you-the- customer...

SIMON

Savings. Excellent, that's-- because as I said before, I'll be needing quite a bit of it... I-- I'm a buyer.

Simon struggles to hold his cover, but the foreman isn't listening closely enough to notice. He rambles on:

FOREMAN

Yup. Best of its kind. We mix it and brick it raw on the premises, but you add the right catalysts, kiln it proper, this stuff is stronger'n steel ten times over, at half the weight.

SIMON

Yes, I-- I've heard good things about the mud... Lot of people are talking about the mud...

Now the foreman turns to him, a little quizzical.

WASH

(to Kaylee)

What happened to Simon? Who is this diabolical master of disguise?

KAYLEE

He's learning...

MAL

(calls to Simon)

'Scuse me, Boss?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAL (cont'd)

I'm sure the foreman's got things  
need attendin' Why don't we wander  
a bit, take a look at the  
operation, then you can figure on  
whether we'll set up our account  
here?

SIMON

Yes?

(playing up role)

I mean, I make the decisions  
around here, uh-- employee...

(to Foreman)

I employ him. He is a person I  
employ. I'm the boss.

The foreman gives him a somewhat confused look.

FOREMAN

O-Kay... So you'll be wantin' to--  
?

SIMON

Yes, I think we'll wander for a  
bit.

FOREMAN

Fair enough. You come see me when  
you're done.

He walks off.

MAL

All right, let's head to worker-  
town.

As they pass by Simon, he reads from their looks that he  
didn't handle things so effectively. But Kaylee falls in step  
with him, brushing the mud off his jacket, smiling.

KAYLEE

I thought you did great.

The crew walks down a muddy lane between two rows of MUD  
DWELLINGS. Jayne looks back at Simon.

JAYNE

(to Mal)

Boy's gonna get us killed. Let's  
just do the deal and git.

(CONTINUED)

MAL

His disguise ain't half so funny  
as yours. What are you supposed to  
be, anyway?

WASH

You haven't been here in years,  
Jayne. You really think you need  
that get-up? No one's gonna  
remember you...

MAL, in the lead, stops, seeing something OS. Deadpan:

MAL

Think it's possible they might.

Before them stands a life-size mud-clay STATUE OF JAYNE on a pedestal. It's posed heroically, staring down in proud defiance. Jayne stares, in shock.

SIMON

Son of a bitch...

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

12 EXT. CANTON TOWN SQUARE - DAY 12

Jayne, Mal and the others look up at Jayne's statue, still stunned speechless. Mal steps up next to Jayne; both are transfixed by the statue.

MAL

Jayne?

JAYNE

Yeah?

MAL

You want to tell me how come  
there's a statue of you, here,  
starin' at me like I owe him  
somethin'?

JAYNE

Wishin' I could, Cap'n.

MAL

No. Seriously. Jayne? You want to  
tell me how come there's a--

Jayne shoots furtive glances all around, keenly aware of his current visibility. His voice is an urgent whisper.

JAYNE

(interrupting)

Look, Mal, I got no ruttin' idea.  
I was here a few years back, like  
I said. Pulled a second-story,  
stole a lotta scratch from the  
Magistrate up on the hill. But  
things went way south, and I had  
to high-tail it. They don't put  
you on a pedestal in town square  
for that--

MAL

Yeah, 'cept I'm lookin' at some  
fair compellin' evidence says they  
do. Or maybe there's more went  
down here than you're lettin' on?

JAYNE

(hand to breast)

On my mother, Mal. I don't got the  
faintest notion.

(CONTINUED)

The others stare up at the statue. Simon is deeply disturbed.

SIMON

This must be what going mad feels like.

WASH

I think they've really captured him, though, you know? Captured his essence.

KAYLEE

He looks sort of angry, don't he?

WASH

Kinda what I meant.

A LOUD STEAM WHISTLE blows - Jayne jumps near a mile.

FOREMAN (O.S.)

(distant, bullhorn)

Shift four, on duty. Shift four, on duty.

A new shift of mud farmers starts coming out of their homes, trudging toward the factory area.

JAYNE

Hey, I got an idea-- 'Stead of hangin' around playin' art critic until I get pinched by The Man, how's about we move the hell away from this eerie-ass piece-a-work and get on with our 'creasingly eerie-ass day? How's that!?

Mal stands, staring at the statue.

MAL

I don't know. This here's a spectacle might warrant a moment's consideration.

Kaylee sidesteps by behind him, looking up, unsettled.

KAYLEE

Wherever I move to, his eyes keep... followin' me.

Jayne stomps off, teeth gritted with fury.

JAYNE

Come on, gorramn it! We got a job, let's go do it ant get outta here.

(CONTINUED)

Jayne stops and turns, a distance away from the statue. But they can barely pull their eyes off it.

JAYNE (cont'd)  
I crossed the Magistrate of this  
company-town, understand? An' he's  
not exactly a forgivin' sorta guy--

13 EXT. HIGGINS' HACIENDA - DAY 13

Inara escorted by a company man, walks across the lawn of the Magistrate's estate.

MAGISTRATE HIGGINS, late fifties, tall, powerfully built under a few decades of doughy excess, stands with his VALET, ready to receive her. She does a graceful curtsey.

INARA  
Magistrate Higgins, I may presume?

HIGGINS  
You may. But I only make the  
people I own use my title.  
(chuckles)  
Mr. Higgins will do fine.

INARA  
And you can call me Inara, Mr.  
Higgins.

HIGGINS  
It's a rare pleasure, your visit  
to my little moon. Journey wasn't  
too taxing?

INARA  
Not at all. I am refreshed and  
ready. Shall we begin at say, six  
o'clock?

HIGGINS  
Perfect.  
(starts to go)  
I have a feeling it will take all  
your arts to deal with this  
particular problem.

INARA  
Every 'problem', Mr. Higgins, is  
an opportunity in disguise...

14

INT. SERENITY - DINING ROOM - DAY

14

River sits at the dining table. Book's Bible is open in front of her, and she scribbles furiously into it, crossing out words, writing in the margins. Book walks in, speaks from across the room.

BOOK  
What are we up to, sweetheart?

RIVER  
Fixing your Bible.

BOOK  
I--uh-- What?

He starts moving over to her.

RIVER  
Bible's broken. Contradictions, faulty logistics--it doesn't make sense...

Now Book sees what she's doing. His Bible's all fucked up, and there's a small stack of torn out pages next to it..

BOOK  
No, no, you can't...

River's still scribbling away as she chatters manically.

RIVER  
So we'll integrate non-progressive evolution theory with God's creation of Eden -- eleven inherent metaphoric parallels already there... eleven, important number, prime number, one goes into the house of eleven eleven times but always comes out one--

BOOK  
River, just take it easy. You shouldn't--

RIVER  
Noah's Ark is a problem--

She flips a page back and forth, frowning at it.

BOOK  
Really.

(CONTINUED)

RIVER  
(rapid nod)  
We'll have to call it early  
quantum state phenomenon-- Only  
way to fit five-thousand species  
of mammal on the same boat-

She tears the page out of the book.

BOOK  
Gimme that!

Book snatches the Bible up, somewhat possessively.

BOOK (cont'd)  
River! You don't fix the Bible!

River looks up at him, sweet, sincere, deadpan:

RIVER  
(holds up torn out pages)  
It's broken. It doesn't make  
sense.

BOOK  
It's not about making sense. It's  
about believing in something, and  
letting that belief be real enough  
to change your life. It's about  
'faith'.  
(gets up)  
You don't fix faith, River. It  
fixes you.

He smiles, trying to gently take the crumpled, torn-out pages  
from her hand. She tugs back. They have a short tug-of-war  
then Book relents.

BOOK (cont'd)  
Why don't you, ah, you hang on to  
those then.

The kind of dirty dive that's actually made of dirt. Rugged,  
simple furnishings, with a crowd of mud-crusted off-duty  
WORKERS hunkered over their beers. A LOCAL BUSKER strums a  
battered GUITAR in one corner. MEADOWS, a young mudder, sweeps  
up the bar with a dust broom. He looks at Jayne with some  
interest.

Our crew sits around a table. Mal has his back against the  
wall, taking in the view.

(CONTINUED)

There's several clay bottles of beer on the table. Jayne pours himself a drink, as do others.

JAYNE

Can't be a statue a' me. No reason for it. Flies in the face of every kinda sense.

WASH

Won't argue with that--  
(drinks, spits it out)  
Gaah! < What is this garbage >!?  
[Je shr shuh muh lan dong shi!?!]

JAYNE

They call it Mudder's Milk.  
(takes a big gulp)  
Got all the vitamins, proteins,  
and carbs of your Grandma's best  
turkey dinner, plus fifteen-  
percent alcohol.

WASH

It's horrific!

SIMON

Worked for the Egyptians.

Jayne downs his glass and exhales, turning to Simon.

JAYNE

Whazzat?

SIMON

The ancient Egyptians, back on Earth- That-Was. It's not so different from the ancestral form of beer they fed to the slaves who built their pyramids. Liquid bread. Kept them from starving, and knocked them out at night, so they wouldn't be inclined to insurrection.

KAYLEE

Wow, Simon... That's so-- so historical.

JAYNE

(to Simon)  
Tell me, Little Miss Big-Words--  
You see a pyramid sittin' out there?

(CONTINUED)

SIMON  
NO-

JAYNE  
(rests his case)  
Neither do I.  
(pours a beer)  
So here, let me pour you a big  
frosty mug of 'shut-the-hell-up.'  
Jayne shoves a mug of beer at  
Simon.

MAL narrows his eyes at a relatively WELL-DRESSED MAN across  
the bar, who seems to be watching them.

MAL  
(to himself)  
Now what's a gussied-up fella like  
you doin' in a place like this?

The man sees he's being seen.

A YOUNG BOY (maybe 13) stands a short distance away from the  
crew's table, staring at Jayne with intense interest.

JAYNE  
Shake your head, boy. Yer eyes are  
stuck.  
(boy still staring)  
'GIT!  
(boy runs off)

The well-dressed man walks up to their table. He stops at Mal.

WELL-DRESSED MAN  
You wouldn't be looking for  
Kessler?

MAL  
Just having a brew.

The man sits, close.

WELL-DRESSED MAN  
I knew a Kessler.

MAL  
"Knew?"

WELL-DRESSED MAN  
He was a good middle-man. Low  
profile, didn't filch.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (3) 15

WELL-DRESSED MAN (cont'd)

But last week, the factory foreman  
and his prod crew heard he was  
moving contraband through town and  
gave him a peck a' trouble for it.

MAL

What kind of a 'peck' was that?

WELL-DRESSED MAN

'Kind where they hacked off his  
hands and feet with machetes and  
rolled him into the bog.

WASH

They peck pretty hard 'round here.

MAL

Listen, I got a client offworld  
waiting for his delivery. If the  
goods are gone --

WELL-DRESSED MAN

Not to worry, your man's  
merchandise is safe in Kessler's  
hiding place. We just got to  
figure out how to get it cross  
town without being seen by the  
foreman and his prods. I'd advise  
we all just lay low for the moment--  
- The Busker starts singing.

BUSKER

JAAAYNE! The man they call  
JAAAYNE!

Jayne hears his name and sits straight up, horrified.

JAYNE

(chinese)

< Hay-soose-mother-of-jumped-up--  
> [Yeh-soo, ta ma duh...]

With lightning reflexes, Kaylee slaps her hand over his mouth;  
the applause of the mud workers (for the busker) helps cover  
Jayne's outburst.

Thus begins 'The Ballad of Jayne'. The mud-workers erupt into  
the opening chorus, swinging their mugs in joyful song.

(CONTINUED)

## CROWD

He robbed from the rich, and gave  
to the poor, stood up to The Man,  
and gave him what for / our love  
for him now, ain't hard to  
explain, THE HERO OF CANTON! THE  
MAN THEY CALL JAYNE!

The crowd gives way to the Busker, who sings verse:

## BUSKER

Our Jayne saw the mudder's backs  
breaking / and he saw the mudders'  
laments / and he saw the  
Magistrate taking / every dollar  
an' leavin' five cents / so he  
said, 'can't do this to my people'  
/ 'can't crush them under your  
heel' / Jayne strapped on his hat,  
and in ten seconds flat, stole  
everything there was fit to steal--

The crowd erupts again, REPEATING THE CHORUS. Over this, Mal and Jayne discuss this unsettling new wrinkle.

## MAL

Umm... Jayne?

## JAYNE

Yeah, Mal.

## MAL

You got any light to shed on this  
development?

## JAYNE

No, Mal.

Simon, seated by Kaylee, looks even more disturbed.

## SIMON

No... This must be what going mad  
feels like...

He lifts up his beer and takes a deep drink.

The chorus ends and the Busker goes back to pickin',  
singing/story-telling another verse.

## BUSKER

And here's what separates heroes/  
from common folk like you an' I /  
the man they call Jayne, turned  
'round his plane / and let that  
money hit sky / he dropped it onto  
our houses / he dropped it into  
our yards / the man called Jayne,  
stole away our pain / and headed  
out for the stars

The crowd has erupted again, REPEATING THE CHORUS. Jayne  
seethes, facts dawning on him:

## JAYNE

I'll be gorranned! That's where  
the cash went!  
(to Mal and the rest)  
I stole that money from Higgins,  
like the song says. Lifted me one  
of his hover-planes, but I got  
tagged by anti-aircraft. Started  
losin' altitude - had to dump them  
strongboxes of money to stay  
airborne.  
(takes a drink)  
Sixty-thousand, untraceable, an' I  
dropped it square in mud-farmer  
central!

The CHORUS ENDS, and the Busker plays a final bit of guitar,  
crescendoing as the crowd APPLAUDS. Wash looks at them all in  
disbelief,

## WASH

We gotta go to the crappy town  
where I'm a hero...

Book steps into his berth and pulls out the sink, starting his  
pre-dinner ablutions. He starts to his bun of hair...

River walks from the common area into the passage leading to  
Book's berth.

Book splashes his face, bent over the sink.

(CONTINUED)

RIVER (O.S.)  
Hello?

BOOK  
In here, River.

River steps into his doorway, looking down at the.. crumpled pages in her hands.

RIVER  
I'm--I tore these out of your symbol, and they turned into paper-- but I want to put them back, so--

BOOK  
Sorry? What's that?

His hair is like a corona of grey fire around his head. River looks up, sees him, and drops the pages.

RIVER  
[highest-pitched scream imaginable] She runs off.

BOOK  
River--?

19 INT. SERENITY - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BOOK'S BERTH - NIGHT 19

River runs by Zoe. Zoe hears Book inside.

BOOK (O.S.)  
River--Come back--

ZOE  
Book? What the happened to--  
(as she turns, looks into Book's door)  
AAA!

She startles at Book's hair.

20 INT. CANTON TAVERN - NIGHT 20

Jayne is hunched over his beer, looking ready to pop a nut. The crowd is lively and drunkish.

JAYNE  
Captain, now they're off the subject of me, shouldn't we be gettin' the hell out of here?

(CONTINUED)

MAL

I'd say that's a reasonable  
request, given the circumstance.

Jayne's up in a flash, stomping out. The others follow in his wake.

JAYNE

Ruttin' mudders...

He pushes the front door open with a heave and stops dead:

21

EXT. CANTON TAVERN - NIGHT

21

The street in front of the tavern is filled with an affordable sea of MUD-WORKERS At the front is the BOY who Jayne chased off before. On sight of Jayne, they all cry:

CROWD

JAYNE!

Off Jayne and Mal's shocked expression, we BLACK-OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

22 EXT. CANTON TAVERN - NIGHT

22

A second after we left. Jayne stands, eyes aflame with alarm, as the crowd chants his name.

CROWD  
JAYNE! JAYNE! JAYNE!

A beat of this, then Jayne turns, unceremoniously darting back into the bar. Wash turns to the others, mocking tremendous excitement.

WASH  
I can't get enough of this local color!

23 INT. CANTON TAVERN - NIGHT

23

The crowd inside has stopped singing, confused. Meadows, the young man who's been sweeping the place, watches as Jayne pushes through them, bellying up to the bar, slams down his hat and goggles, desperate for drink.

JAYNE  
Gimme some milk.

The BARTENDER splashes a bottle of mudder's milk into a glass and Jayne takes a slug.

Meadows puts his broom down, stepping into the middle of the tavern behind Jayne, who's drinking down the mudder's milk.

MEADOWS  
Don't you understand?! He's come back!  
(crowd still lost)  
It's Jayne!

Jayne's eyes dart like a wounded bull's in the ring. The bartender SLAPS the glass away from his lips.

JAYNE  
What th--

BARTENDER  
The hero of Canton won't be drinking that < panda urine >  
[shiong mao niao].

(CONTINUED)

He pulls a dusty WHISKEY BOTTLE from below the bar and slams it down.

BARTENDER (cont'd)  
He drinks the best whiskey in th'  
house.

Jayne, mystified, watches the Bartender pour.

CROWD INSIDE BAR  
[erupts into a CHEER]

They converge on him, slapping his back, shaking his hand. The brute has lost his connection to reality, just stands there as if in a strange dream.

MAL and the others push back into the crowded bar. The well-dressed man catches MAL by the sleeve, alarmed.

WELL-DRESSED MAN  
'Hell is goin' on? This how people  
lay low where you're from?!

MAL  
Not generally, no...

WELL-DRESSED MAN  
Listen, friend, I came here to  
make sure a deal went down solid,  
not to get chopped up by the  
Canton prod crew and fed to the  
bog!

MAL pulls the man's grasping hand from his arm, a touch riled by the contact. He's intuitively piecing out a new strategy.

MAL  
Understand your concerns, friend.  
But this here is all part of our  
new plan.

KAYLEE  
Captain? How exactly is this part  
of our--

MAL  
(gritted teeth)  
Still workin' the details...

Inara has laid out a complex array of bowls and china on a low table in the main area of her shuttle.

(CONTINUED)

She's preparing for the COMPANION TEA CEREMONY. She lights a candle, then flips open a pretty silver pocketwatch, nodding to herself as she checks the time. There is a knock at her OS door.

Magistrate Higgins steps into the doorway.

HIGGINS

Inara, allow me to introduce my son, Fess Higgins.

FESS HIGGINS, the president's twenty-six year-old son, steps into the doorway. He's on the heavy side, but not unattractive, in his way. Inara smiles warmly.

INARA

Hello, Fess.

(to Higgins)

Mr. Higgins, this shuttle is a Place Of Union. I'm sure you can appreciate--

HIGGINS

The lady said 'hello', Fess. Don't just stand there looking at your shoes--

FESS

Dad--

Higgins forcefully guides Fess into the shuttle, stopping just short of the tea ceremony table.

HIGGINS

Get in there, son, make a man of yourself!

INARA

Mr. Higgins--

HIGGINS

(sees tea set-up)

what is this? I brought you here to bed my son, not throw him a tea party--

Inara is polite, but afire with firmness.

INARA

Sir, the Companion Greeting Ceremony is a ritual with centuries of tradition behind it. There are reasons for the way we do things.

(CONTINUED)

HIGGINS

Listen, Inara, I called on you for one thing and one thing only. My son is twenty-six years old and he ain't yet a man. Twenty-six!  
(looks at son w/ contempt)  
And since he can't find a willin' woman himself -

Inara takes Higgins by the arm and starts gently but firmly guiding him out of the shuttle. He blusters but goes along.

INARA

Mr. Higgins, you are not allowed here.

HIGGINS

I--What?

INARA

As I said, this room is a consecrated Place Of Union. Only your son belongs here.

HIGGINS

Well! This is-- I--

She escorts him out the door. There's a WET SHLUP as Higgins shoes hit the muddy ground.

INARA

Now you go on, and let us begin our work.

HIGGINS

Now you listen here, young lady--

Inara flashes a sweet smile and closes the door on him.

INARA

Goodnight, Mr. Higgins.

Inara resets an out-of-place hair, smooths her countenance, and turns to Fess, now the portrait of hospitality.

INARA (cont'd)

Well. That's a bit more peaceful.  
Will you sit?

Jayne leans against the bar, drink in hand, surrounded by adorers. He's starting to get into it. Meadows raises his mug.

(CONTINUED)

MEADOWS  
To Jayne--

CROWD  
To Jayne!

They all drink. Jayne grins, despite himself, and swigs down his drink. The bartender fills it immediately. Jayne smiles wider, lifts his glass.

JAYNE  
To the Mudders!

CROWD  
To the Mudders!

They drink again.

Wash and Mal stand off to the side. Wash has a glass of whiskey in his hand. A MUDDER ELDER, in his sixties, finishes his drink and turns to Mal.

MUDDER ELDER  
So, you're one of Jayne's men, eh?  
Wash smiles. Mal's not pleased.

MAL  
What? No--

MUDDER ELDER  
Must be a heck of an honor,  
servin' under a man like that.  
Strong as a drafthorse, ain't he?

MAL  
Listen mudhead, I don't--

MUDDER ELDER  
An' a heart as big as all  
outdoors...

Wash CHUCKLES, patting Mal on the back.

WASH  
Yup, we're just happy he lets us  
stay.

At a table, Simon and Kaylee sit, drinking. Simon's actually a little plastered, and Kaylee's having the time of her life, nestled next to him.

SIMON  
(a little slurred - more  
reminiscing than bitter)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SIMON (cont'd)

You know, I've saved lives.  
Dozens. Maybe hundreds. I re-  
attatched a girl's leg. Her whole  
leg. She named her hamster after  
me. I got a hamster. He drops a  
box of money, he gets a town.

KAYLEE

Hamsters is nice -

SIMON

To Jayne! The box dropping, man-  
ape- gone-wrong-thing, hero of  
mudville.

Kaylee laughs and drinks his toast with him.

KAYLEE

You know, you're pretty funny,  
even without cussin'...

Simon takes another sip and smiles at her, seeing her in the  
drunken light which makes all things sublime.

SIMON

You know.. you're pretty...  
pretty.

Kaylee's smile drops. She wants to make sure she heard right.

KAYLEE

What? What did you say?

SIMON

(drunk smile)

Nothing. Just that you're  
pretty... Even when you're covered  
with engine grease, you're-- maybe  
'specially when you're covered  
with engine grease, you're--

Mal steps in over them, unintentionally cutting Simon off.

MAL

It's time to get out of this  
nuthouse. Got some plannin' to  
work out.

KAYLEE

Now, Captain?! But things are  
goin' so well!

MAL

(not quite getting it)

Um.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

25

CONTINUED: (3)

MAL (cont'd)

I suppose, Jayne's certainly  
feelin' better about life. But we--  
Kaylee gives Mal a fierce look.

KAYLEE

I said things are goin' well--

MAL

(gets it)

Oh. 'Well'. Well... I tell you  
what. Jayne's stuck here with his  
adoring masses, how about you and  
Simon hang around, keep an eye on  
him for me?

Simon raises his glass, oblivious to any sub-text at this  
point, drunker by the minute.

26

INT. SERENITY - CARGO BAY - NIGHT

26

Book and Zoe are crouched, Book's magnificent hair still out  
of it's cage. River is inside the bay's secret compartment.

RIVER (O.S.)

(to herself, rapid)

They say the snow on the roof is  
too heavy--they say the ceiling  
will cave in--his brains are in  
terrible danger--

BOOK

River..? Please, why don't you  
come on out...

RIVER (O.S.)

No. Can't. Too much hair.

BOOK

(surprised)

Is-- Is that it?

He turns to Zoe, who nods.

ZOE

Hell yes, preacher. If I didn't  
have stuff to get done, I'd be in  
there with her...

Book gives Zoe a lock of mild affront and starts tying up his  
hair.

(CONTINUED)

BOOK  
(to River)  
It's the rules of my order... Like  
the book, it symbolizes --

ZOE  
(cuts him off)  
Uh-huh. River, honey... He's  
putting the hair away now...

RIVER (O.S.)  
Doesn't matter. It'll still be  
there...waiting...

WASH (O.S.)  
Honey, we're home!

Mal and wash walk into the cargo bay. Zoe goes to them.

ZOE  
Where you guys been? Mal,  
Bernoulli's chompin' at the bit.  
Says he wants his merchandise  
yesterday--

MAL  
Yeah, well, we got a couple of  
wrinkles to work out on the deal.

WASH  
(bit buzzed on drink)  
Did you know Jayne is a bonafide  
folk hero? Got a song and  
everything.

ZOE  
(as in 'get out')  
< Shut up. > [Hoo-tsuh.]  
(eyes Wash)  
You been drinkin', husband.

MAL  
That he has. Don't make it any  
less the case.

ZOE  
You're telling me Jayne is a--

MAL  
(nods)  
It's true. True enough to use,  
anyways.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAL (cont'd)

We've talked a few pillars of the mudder community into havin' a little 'Jayne Day' celebration in town square tomorrow... That should buy us enough distraction to get those stolen goods out from under the foreman and his crew a' prods...

ZOE

You're really gonna have to start again.

They stop by Book.

MAL

Shepherd, everything goin' OK?

BOOK

I, uh, I'm working on it, Captain.

RIVER (O.S.)

We need a snow shovel...

Fess sits next to Inara at the low table, sipping his tea.

FESS

(looking into his cup)

It's just...my father's always been so in control, of everything, of me, of everyone... I could never be like him, no matter who he pays to--

(reddens, looks up)

I'm sorry... This whole thing, it is embarrassing. My father's right again, I guess. And to have to bring you here, to--

INARA

Your father isn't right, Fess. It's not embarrassing to be a virgin. It's simply one state of being. And as far as bringing me here-- Companions choose the people they're to be with very carefully... For example, if your father asked me to come here for him, I wouldn't have.

FESS

Really?

(CONTINUED)

INARA

Really, Fess. But you're different  
from him.

She turns to him, stroking his cheek, looking into his eyes.

INARA (cont'd)

The more you accept that, the  
stronger you'll become...

She leans in and kisses him gently on the lips.

28

INT. CANTON TAVERN - NIGHT

28

Jayne now has a WOMAN on one arm, clinging to him. She's somewhere between robust and plain, but with a Janis Joplin carnality that suits him. He speaks to Meadows, who looks at him adoringly.

JAYNE

So the Magistrate, he let you  
folks keep all that cash?

MEADOWS

He did. And it pained him, that's  
for dead sure. When he found out,  
he sent his prods in to take it  
back from us... But the workers  
resisted.

JAYNE

Fought the law, eh?

MEADOWS

(nods)

If the mudders are together on a  
thing, there's too many of us to  
be put down... So in the end, he  
just called it a 'bonus.'

JAYNE

(rueful laugh)

One hell of a bonus...

MEADOWS

And then, when we put that statue  
of you up in town square, he  
rolled in, wanted to tear it down.  
But the whole town rioted...

This, the idea of violence in his name, touches our drunken Jayne so deeply, a tear comes to his eye.

(CONTINUED)

JAYNE

(drunken emotion)

You guys started a riot? On account of me? Oh... I am truly touched, truly, truly touched by that. I mean, all of this has been swell and all, but that, my very own riot...

(almost chokes up)

...that's just about the nicest thing I ever heard...

MEADOWS

I can't believe you're back...

He throws a big arm over Meadows, squeezing him warmly

JAYNE

How could I stay away?

29

INT. HIGGINS' HACIENDA - NIGHT

29

Higgins paces as the foreman comes in, led by a VALET.

FOREMAN

Magistrate Higgins--

Higgins is only vaguely listening, lost in his dirty hopes.

HIGGINS

M'son's out there, I pray to God losin' his cherry...

FOREMAN

There's a problem in worker-town, sir.

(Higgins listening)

Jayne Cobb's come back.

Whatever we can do to subtly imply that ancient, boiling hatred has just snapped a nerve in this Higgins' head...

30

OMITTED

30

31

EXT. CANTON PRISON FIELD - NIGHT

31

Out on the bog. A catwalk stretches out to an area dotted with rusted steel boxes (not unlike the hotbox from Cool Hand Luke). Airholes poke through doors in their fronts.

(CONTINUED)

Higgins and the foreman are at one of the boxes. The foreman carries a beat-up duffel bag.

The foreman fumbles through some keys and opens the door. Rank darkness inside. CAMERA PUSHES IN on the small dark doorway. We hear rustling inside the scratch of uncut nails along a wall.

HIGGINS  
Evening, Stitch.

STITCH (O.S.)  
(hissing exhale)  
What do you want with me?

HIGGINS  
Nothing. You've done your time.  
Paid your debt. Time you were on  
your way.

STITCH HESSIAN'S face pushes out of the shadows inside, fast. Half of it is a mass of scar tissue; one eye is missing.

He slithers out of the box, dropping heavily to his feet on the catwalk. He's a tall, creepy son-of-Manson, long bedraggled hair and beard, scarred all over his sinewy body.

Higgins nods to the foreman, who throws the duffel at Stitch.

HIGGINS (cont'd)  
Here. I believe these were your  
personal affects...

Stitch looks in the duffel, surprised to pull out a SHOTGUN. Higgins turns, starting to walk away, then stops.

STITCH  
You keep me in that box four years  
and then give me a loaded gun?

HIGGINS  
Got the urge to use it, no doubt.  
But I'm not the one that brought  
you in on that robbery. I'm not  
the one who partnered up with you  
and then turned on you when his  
plan went south. How high up was  
that shuttle when he pushed you  
out? Thirty feet? Jayne Cobb cost  
you four years of your life, plus  
a perfectly good eyeball. And  
here's the poetical portion. he's  
back in town. This very day.

(CONTINUED)

Stitch's body tenses with hideous rage He COCKS his gun.

HIGGINS (O.S.)  
Best of luck in your new life.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

32 INT. CANTON TAVERN - MORNING 32

The morning after. One or two MUDDERS lie passed out. Camera finds Kaylee and Simon. They're tangled up in each other, asleep. Kaylee has her hand on Simon's chest, under his shirt, which is half-unbuttoned. She wakes groggily, sees Simon next to her, and smiles, soaking him in.

Then Mal is above her. She turns and smiles at him, too, still half-asleep.

KAYLEE  
(dreamy)  
Hiya, Captain...  
(snaps out of it)  
Captain!!

This wakes up Simon, who gets his bearings quickly.

SIMON  
Wha--? Kay--? - Mal! Mal, I-uh...

He starts untangling himself roughly from Kaylee's embrace.

SIMON  
Captain, nothing happened-- There  
was some drinking, but-- We  
certainly didn't-- I mean, I would  
never-- not with Kaylee, I-- I  
assure you, nothing inappropriate  
took place--

KAYLEE  
What do you mean, not with me?

Kaylee, getting pissed, helps him untangle with a strong shove. Mal is uninterested.

MAL  
Uh-huh... Where's my hero?

JAYNE  
(singing)  
He robbed from the rich, and gave  
to the poor, stood up to The Man,  
and gave him what for...

Jayne descends the stairs into the tavern from the rooms above. His arm around the woman from last night.

(CONTINUED)

JAYNE (cont'd)  
The living legend needs eggs!  
(gives it thought)  
Or another 'milk, maybe.

MAL  
No. The living legend is comin'  
with us. He has a little  
appearance to make.

JAYNE  
He does?

MAL  
That's right. This job here has  
gone way past long enough.

JAYNE  
(to the woman)  
You go on, now. Got me important  
hero-type stuff to do.

Kaylee follows them to the door. Simon gets up, to fall in line, but Kaylee turns on him.

KAYLEE  
Where you goin'?

SIMON  
What? I'm coming with y--

She pokes him in the chest, miffed enough to not want him around for a bit.

KAYLEE  
I don't think so. No, maybe you ought to stay here. It's about the time for a civilized person to have his breakfast. That's the sorta thing would be appropriate, don't you think?

Simon turns to Mal, who shrugs. It's clear Simon is only an honorary member of the club; Kaylee outranks him. They turn and go, leaving Simon alone in the tavern.

SIMON  
Mal...  
(as they walk out)  
Guys?

MAL  
See you on the ship, Doc.

(CONTINUED)

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32 CONTINUED: (2) 32

Simon shakes his head, still groggy, and sits down. After a beat, he turns to the bartender.

SIMON  
Excuse me... Could I see a menu?

BARTENDER  
(laughing snort)  
"Menu"...

33 INT. INARA'S SHUTTLE - MORNING 33

Fess lies next to Inara in bed.

INARA  
You're very quiet.

FESS  
I'm sorry -- I'm just -- I just thought I'd feel... different, after... Aren't I supposed to be a "man" now?

INARA  
A man's just a boy who's old enough to ask that question. Our time together, it's a ritual, a symbol. It means something to your father. I hope it was not entirely forgettable for you...

FESS  
Oh, no, it was...

INARA  
But it doesn't make you a man.  
That you do yourself.

This seems to sink in with Fess. We hear a loud RAPPING at the shuttle door.

HIGGINS (O.S.)  
Fess! Fess Higgins, get out here!

34 EXT. CANTON BACKSTREET - DAY 34

Mal and Jayne walk along the lane of shanties we used once before. Kaylee walks a distance behind.

MAL  
So that's where the little 'Jayne' celebration we planned comes in...  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAL (cont'd)

Should give us time to move the  
goods back onto Serenity...

JAYNE

I dunno. I mean, do you think we  
should be usin' my fame to  
hoodwink folks?

Mal stops, turning.

MAL

You better laugh when you say  
that.

JAYNE

No really, Mal. I mean, maybe  
there's somethin' to this-- The  
Mudders... I think I really made a  
difference in their lives. Me, you  
know? Jayne Cobb.

MAL

I know your name, jackass.

JAYNE

Did you know they had a riot on my  
account?

Mal turns as Wash drives up on the MULE, with Zoe.

WASH

Morning, kids.

ZOE

Is that Jayne? Is that really him?  
Wash-- pinch me, I must be  
dreamin'.

Mal hops on the Mule, as does Kaylee. He turns to Jayne.

JAYNE

Hell, I'll pinch ya.

MAL

Just get on over to town square,  
Jayne. Your fans are waiting. They  
drive off.

Wash drives the mule to a deserted back area of Canton, and  
they all dismount.

They clamber through the reeds, and come upon a steep earth-cut.

Down in it we see a pile of CRATES, covered with a mud-colored CAMOUFLAGE TARP.

MAL

Here we go...

36 INT. INARA'S SHUTTLE - DAY 36

Fess is sitting down in the shuttle. Inara is cleaning up tea stuff.

INARA

A criminal hearing?

FESS

My father's ordered me to attend. See, there was this man. It happened when I was growing up here. He stole a ton of money from my Dad, and gave it to the poor, to my father's workers. And he's become kind of a folk hero in Canton.

INARA

Go on.

FESS

Well, he's back. Apparently he landed here yesterday.

INARA

Yesterday.

(sighs, to herself)

Oh, no.

(to Fess)

I know this man. He's-- he just has this idiotic sense of nobility, you know? He can never just let things be-- He thinks he's this hard-hearted criminal, and he can be unrelenting... but there's a side to him that is so...

FESS

You mean you actually know Jayne?

You could knock her over with a feather.

(CONTINUED)

INARA

Jayne? Jayne Cobb? You're talking about Jayne Cobb.

FESS

Yes. Jayne Cobb, the Hero Of Canton. The only person I ever saw who stood up to my father.

INARA

I--wha--nnn?

FESS

My Dad traced him back to his ship. He had Port Control put a land-lock on it. Jayne'll get back and find out he's grounded. I sort of hate the idea of his getting caught.

INARA

(still thrown)

Yes. That would be bad.

37

INT. CANTON TAVERN - DAY

37

Simon picks through a plate of MUDDER FOOD, nose wrinkling at every greasy item on it.

SIMON

Uh... Ahem, Could I just get the-- the check, please?

Then he sees that the bartender is gone. The door SLAMS open. Stitch Hessian stands in the doorway, backlit.

STITCH

Heard tell you run with Jayne Cobb...

Simon, squinting into the daylight, with Stitch's shadow falling over him.

SIMON

Excuse me?

STITCH

You're gonna take me to that dirty low-down shingle of a man...

Stitch strides toward Simon, who bristles, somewhere between affronted and afraid.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON  
Listen, 'sir', I don't know who  
you think you--

Stitch backhands Simon across the face with vicious force,  
slapping him to the floor.

STITCH  
Sir!? Look at me, ya' pantywaist  
idjit!

He kicks Simon in the guts, hard.

STITCH (cont'd)  
I just spent the last four years  
steamin' in a hotbox and you're  
sirrin' me?

He kicks him again, then reaches down and lifts him up with  
one hand. Simon reaches desperately for a clay beer bottle off  
a table as Stitch talks.

STITCH (cont'd)  
Folks say you're part a' Jayne's  
team. So--

Stitch pulls a SWITCHBLADE from his belt and flicks it open  
alongside Simon's face.

STITCH (cont'd)  
Where is that no-good reptile  
hidin' hisself? You tell me, boy,  
or I'm a' cut off every last bit  
a' your good looks.

Simon brings the bottle up and smashes it against the side of  
Stitch's head. Stitch SLASHES THE KNIFE ACROSS THE BACK OF  
SIMON'S FOREARM! Simon drops the jagged bottle neck.

SIMON  
Aaagh!

Stitch slams his fist into Simon's face, dropping him.

STITCH  
(low chuckle)  
Not done yet, youngin'... That's  
gonna cost you an eye.

Stitch whips his head around as he hears an OS chanting, down  
the street:

(CONTINUED)

CROWD (O.S.)  
Jayne! Jayne! Jayne! He hauls  
Simon toward the door.

STITCH  
Come on.

38

EXT. CANTON STREET - DAY

38

The mule drives by, as its riders witness the MASS OF MUDDERS  
thronging in the distance.

39

EXT. CANTON SQUARE - DAY

39

Jayne stands before his statue, arms upraised, amid a throng  
of MUDDERS, who chant his name.

CROWD  
Jayne! Jayne! Jayne!

The foreman and his PRODS stand in a tight snarl of hip-boots  
and truncheons. The Prod turns to the foreman.

PROD  
Come on, sir, let's just get in  
there and--

FOREMAN  
No. Magistrate says no, so we hold  
position. Understand me?

The Prod and his ilk are chomping at the bit.

40

INT. SERENITY - CARGO BAY - DAY

40

Mal, Zoe, and Wash haul crates of STOLEN PROP up the ramp (off  
the mule?) sweating from the honest labor of lifting. Mal  
slaps the top of the last crate with finality, breathing easy  
for the first time in a day.

MAL  
Zoe, pack down this cargo. Wash,  
you heat up Serenity, We're  
blowin' this mess inside a' half  
an hour. Wash heads off for the  
bridge.

WASH  
Already there.

(CONTINUED)

MAL  
(to Kaylee)  
Let's go get our wayward babes.

He turns and starts heading back out the door. Kaylee follows.

41

EXT. CANTON SQUARE - DAY

41

Meadows finally manages to quiet the townfolk. Meadows cries out.

MEADOWS  
Speech!

CROWD  
Speech! Speech!

A wave of public-speaking anxiety sweeps over Jayne, but he succumbs to will of the people.

JAYNE  
I'm no good with words. Don't use  
'em much, myself...  
(crowd chuckles)  
But I want to thank y'all, for  
bein' here, and for thinking so  
much of me... Far as I see it, You  
people have been given the  
shortest end of a stick ever  
offered a human soul in this crap-  
heel 'verse... But you took that  
end, and you, you know... Well...  
You took it. And that's... I guess  
that's somethin'.

Jayne nods. The crowd APPLAUDS. Kaylee and Mal have just arrived.

KAYLEE  
Wow... That didn't sound half  
bad...

MAL  
I'm shocked, my own self.

The applause halts as A SHOTGUN BLAST EXPLODES.

Stitch stands there, shotgun pointed skyward and smoking, Simon, bloody, held up by the scruff. He hurls Simon forward, he pitches into the dirt, barely conscious.

(CONTINUED)

JAYNE  
(moment of disbelief)  
Stitch Hessian...

STITCH  
Hey there, Jayne. Thought I'd make  
ya watch while I butcher me one a'  
your boys.

Jayne looks down at Simon. He covers for him.

JAYNE  
Ain't one a mine, Stitch...

Stitch looks at Simon, then at Jayne, skeptical.

JAYNE (cont'd)  
(mirthless chuckle)  
Where you been hidin'? You gone  
and got yourself lookin' mighty  
hideous...

STITCH  
(laughs at it)  
Yeah...

Stitch walks past Simon, squaring off with Jayne, about twenty feet between them.

The prods and the foreman look on. The prods are jumpy, but they see that the foreman is smiling.

FOREMAN  
Yep. Now Jayne gets his...

Kaylee gets to Simon and gathers him up into her arms.

SIMON  
Kaylee--?

KAYLEE  
Aw honey...

STITCH  
So what's this 'bout the 'Hero a'  
Canton'? Was I hearin' that right?  
Four years' lock-down can play  
tricks on the ears...

Jayne looks around at the crowd, their scared eyes, remembering suddenly he has an audience.

(CONTINUED)

JAYNE

Ain't no hero, Stitch. Just a workin' stiff like yourself...

STITCH

(fit of cackling)

Whoo! Yessir! Now that is funny...  
(to the crowd)  
Yep. He's right, Jayne is. Fact, we used to work together, he an' I.

The crowd looks to Jayne, who seems to redden a bit. Mal gets to the front of the crowd, about ten paces from Stitch; he's too tuned in. He swings his shotgun at Mal, covering him.

STITCH (cont'd)

Now you let ol' Stitch speak his piece.

Mal raises his hands slightly. Instinctively, Mal knows he's dealing with a cold and deadly son-of-a-bitch.

MAL

(slight nod)

Go on, then.

STITCH

Whole lotta money inna Magistrate's safe, weren't there, Jayne?

(to crowd)  
Got away clean too. But then our plane took a hit, an' we were goin' down. Dumped the fuel reserve, dumped the life support, hell we even dumped the seats. Then there was Jayne, the money and me. And there was no way he was gonna drop that money...

MEADOWS

He did! He dropped it on the mudders!

STITCH

By accident, you inbred dunghead! He tossed me out first. We run together six months and he turned on me 'fore I could scream.

JAYNE

You'd'a done the same.

(CONTINUED)

STITCH

Not ever! You protect the man  
you're with -- you watch his back!  
Everybody knows that -- 'cept the  
"hero of Canton."

JAYNE

You gonna talk me to death, buddy?  
That the plan?

Meadows turns to Jayne, eyes imploring him. Jayne looks away. Jayne's hand is sliding up his side, reaching for the hilt of his knife.

STITCH

This is the plan.

Stitch lifts up the shotgun, cocking it in the same motion, and fires, square at Jayne.

Meadows hurls his body in the way, taking the blast full in the chest.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

42

EXT. CANTON SQUARE - DAY

42

Meadows falls, dead. Jayne throws his knife.

Knife whizzes through the air and catches Stitch dead center in the chest. He staggers back, and throws the spent gun to the side. He and Jayne charge each other, ROARIN' LIKE BULLS.

Jayne catches him, they struggle. Jayne spins Stitch, shoving him (he's beginning to flag from the knife) back.

Jayne gets to his statue and starts smashing the back of Stitch's head against it- Over and over. As much as is showable, he Peckinpaws Stitch's sorry ass.

The crowd, MAL, our crew, the prods, everyone is silent. Jayne rears up from the OS bloody mess of his ex-partner, and turns to Meadow's body, which lies in the mud near him. He starts to pick him up, but the man flops, lifeless.

JAYNE  
Get up you stupid piece-a-- Get  
up!

Jayne looks down into Meadow's open, dead eyes.

The YOUNG BOY (13, from the end of act 1) stands over Stitch's body. He reaches for the knife...

JAYNE (cont'd)  
(still to Meadows)  
What'd you do that for? What's  
wrong with you? Didn't you hear a  
word he said? I'm a mean, dumb  
sommbitch!  
(drops the body)  
An' you don't take no bullets for  
a dumb sommbitch, you dumb  
sommbitch!

Jayne turns back to the crowd.

JAYNE (cont'd)  
All of you! You think someone's  
just gonna drop money on ya, money  
they could use? There ain't people  
like that! There's just people  
like me.

Jayne turns to the boy, who holds his bloody knife out to him. Jayne takes it, seeing the unabated reverence in his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

Jayne's eyes go wild for a beat. He walks past the boy, to his statue.

With a MIGHTY HEAVE he pushes it back, toppling it, continuing on out, the others following.

They jog up the ramp, Kaylee helping Simon. Jayne stalks in after them, head down, silent. He just keeps walking. Mal hits the ship's comm.

MAL

Wash, we're in. Get us the hell offa this mud-ball.

WASH (O.S.)

(over intercom)

Uh.. yeah...I'm--uh--workin' on that.

Wash's screen all flash: "LAND-LOCK"

WASH

(to himself)

< motherless goats of all  
motherless goats > [Gao yang jong  
duh goo yang.]

He hits switches all over, trying to override it. Inara walks into the bridge.

INARA

Hello, Wash. Has there been any problem with take-off--?

WASH

Is there a problem? Is there a problem?!

The 'LAND-LOCK' message changes to "LAND-LOCK RELEASED". Wash sits up, calms down.

WASH (cont'd)

Uh, no. We're fine.

Inara just smiles as we hear the ENGINES START TO WARM UP.

46 EXT. HIGGINS' MOON - LANDING AREA - DAY 46

Serenity takes off, leaving this ugly-ass moon behind.

47 INT. HIGGINS' HACIENDA - DAY 47

Fess sits at the dining room table. His red-faced, furious father looms over him, barking. Fess smiles, relaxed.

HIGGINS  
You did WHAT!?

FESS  
I sent an override to Port  
control. Lifted the land-lock on  
Serenity.

HIGGINS  
I ought to tear that smile off  
your head! How dare you defy me!  
You-- You--

FESS  
You wanted to make a man of me,  
Dad. I guess it worked.

48 OMITTED 48

49 INT. PASSENGER DORM 49

River sits, reading intently - and ripping a page out, setting it beside her. Book passes, coming from his room with his taped together bible. He moves to speak -

RIVER  
(not looking up)  
Just keep walking, preacher-man.

He does.

KAYLEE (O.S.)  
You got to be steely.

50 INT. SIMON'S ROOM 50

It's darkish in here - intimate, as it's near bed time. Simon sits on his bed, a bandage on his cut forehead, a bit of a bloody eye. Kaylee touches his face, gently, as she talks.

(CONTINUED)

KAYLEE

Can't be letting men stomp on you  
so much.

SIMON

Wasn't exactly a plan...

KAYLEE

You ain't weak - You couldn't beat  
him back? Or would that not be  
"appropriate"?

SIMON

You're never letting go of that,  
are you?

KAYLEE

Well you confound me some, is all.  
You like me well enough, we get  
along, and then you go all stiff.

SIMON

(misunderstanding)

I'm not - I didn't --

KAYLEE

See? You're doing it right now.  
What's so damn important about  
bein' proper? Don't mean nothin'  
out here in the black.

SIMON

It means more out here. It's all I  
have. My way of being, polite or  
however - it's the only way I have  
of showing you that I like you. Of  
showing respect.

A beat as she takes this in.

KAYLEE

So when we made love last night -

SIMON

(ack!)

When we what?

KAYLEE

(laughing)

You really are such an easy mark.

51

INT. SERENITY - CARGO BAY - NIGHT

51

Jayne stands looking at his knife on the catwalk above the bay. Mal walks in, Jayne sees him, sheathes the knife. Mal rests his hands on the rail by him. Then, after a long beat.

JAYNE

Don't make no sense.

(beat)

Why the hell'd that mudder go an  
do that, Mal? Jumpin' in front a'  
that shotgun blast. Weren't a one  
of them understood what happened  
out there - hell, they're probably  
stickin' that statue right back  
up.

MAL

Most like.

JAYNE

Don't know why that eats at me  
so...

MAL

It's my estimation that every man  
ever got a'statue made of him was  
one kind of sommbitch or another.  
Ain't about you, Jayne. 'Bout what  
they need.

Beat as Jayne takes this in. Neither man moves.

JAYNE

Don't make no sense.

52

OMITTED

52

53

OMITTED

53

END OF EPISODE